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Globalization and interdependence: international migration and development

Letter dated 31 March 2006 from the Permanent Representative of Benin to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to attach hereto the declaration adopted at the close of the Ministerial Conference of the Least Developed Countries on Migrants' Remittances, held in Cotonou on 9 and 10 February 2006 (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would arrange for this letter and its annex to be circulated as documents of the sixty-first session of the General Assembly, under item 54 (b) of the provisional agenda.

(*Signed*) Simon B. **Idohou**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative
Chairman of the Coordinating Bureau
of the Least Developed Countries

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Annex to the letter dated 31 March 2006 from the Permanent Representative of Benin to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

[Original: English]

Ministerial Conference of the Least Developed Countries on Migrants' Remittances

Ministerial Declaration

Cotonou, 10 February 2006

We, Ministers and Heads of delegations of the Least Developed Countries (LDCs), having met on 9 and 10 February 2006 in Cotonou, at the Ministerial Conference of the Least Developed Countries on Migrants' Remittances;

Recalling the Millennium Declaration and, more particularly the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), aiming at achieving extreme poverty reduction;

Recalling the recommendations of the Third United Nations Conference on LDCs that was held in Brussels in May 2001 and which resulted in the adoption of the Programme of Action of the LDCs for the Decade 2001-2010;

Recalling the Monterrey Consensus;

Recalling the outcome of the Ministerial Conference organized in August 2002 in Cotonou on the theme: "Implementation of the Programme of Action of the LDCs and the fight against Poverty";

Recalling the outcome of the High Level Segment of the Economic and Social Council of June 2004 in New York, and the round table on the theme: "Enhancing the development impact of remittances of the LDCs";

Underscoring the importance and the economic and social value of funds remitted by migrants and the Diaspora;

Reaffirming the necessity to identify the areas of priority action for Governments and other actors in order to facilitate the flow of remittances, and enhance their development impact in LDCs, while respecting the private nature of these flows;

In light of the thematic presentations made during the Ministerial conference and given the rich debates generated;

Aware of the need to work jointly and in synergy to contribute effectively and efficiently in the global fight against poverty;

Clarifying the fact that enhancing the development impact of remittances is by no way an encouragement or signal for skilled labour to leave LDCs and migrate to developed countries;

Recognizing the importance of sharing and transfer of knowledge, capacities, and good practices in the area of remittances between LDCs and other developing countries within South-South cooperation

Note the importance of the migratory phenomenon in a globalized world that takes into account the flow of migrants of the LDCs;

Recognize the importance of migrant remittances as well as their impact on the development of migrant countries of origin, while emphasizing that remittances are not a substitute for official development assistance;

Appeal to Governments of the LDCs to put in place a migration policy and an enabling environment that include migrants' education and training and aim at encouraging investment from migrants;

Urge the Governments of countries of origin and receiving countries of migrants, national, regional and international financial and banking Institutions, United Nations System Organizations and other appropriate Institutions, Organizations and Bodies working in the area of the building of an inclusive financial system in the LDCs, as well as the Diaspora and NGOs to :

- √ work together in reinforcing the institutional framework for remittances;
- √ promote inter-state and inter-institutional cooperation between countries of origin and receiving countries;
- √ seek and establish safe ways and means for migrants to transfer their remittances to countries of origin;

- √ seek lasting solutions for the enhancement of the impact of remittances on development;

5. **Foster** initiatives aiming at better organizing movement of migrant workers' so that receiving countries and countries of origin could derive mutual benefits;

6. **Urge** Governments and financial institutions to develop financial products to attract migrant savings and investments;

7. **Urge** Governments of host countries to consider introducing tax relief for remittances similar to tax incentives provided for investment funds and charitable donations;

8. **Request** the International Organisation for Migration and other relevant organisations to further support the LDCS in the effective implementation of "Migration for Development" Programmes;

9. **Underscore** the importance for Governments of creating an enabling environment for enhancing the development impact of remittances by:

   - √ Developing capacity, instruments and institutions to maximize the potential of remittances in the development of the LDCs
   - √ Building inclusive financial sector that links remittances to other forms of financial intermediation including microfinance and safety net mechanisms as well as creation of Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs)
   - √ Engaging Diasporas and Home Town Associations (HTAs) in national development process of LDCs
   - √ Improving data collection and knowledge base of remittances in the LDCs
   - √ Strengthening Public Private Partnerships (PPPs), with a view to reducing transaction costs of remittances and improving access to banking and financial products and services

10. **Encourage** the formation of migrants' associations and promote sensitization among migrants regarding development programmes in their countries of origin;

11. **Recognize** the importance of South-South migration and invite the countries and regional Organisations involved to facilitate the movement of persons and promote a better efficiency of remittances mechanisms;

12. **Invite** host countries, in particular the developed countries to adopt migration policies that take into account the MDGs and to improve the efficiency of migrants' remittances mechanisms;

13. **Recommend** the establishment of a "Migrant Remittances Observatory for LDCs".

14. **Favourably** welcome the offer of the Government of the Republic of Benin to host the head office of the "International Migrant Remittances Observatory for LDCs";

15. **Request** the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) and other relevant organisations to support the establishment and operationalisation of this Observatory as soon as possible;

16. **Request** the United Nations Office of High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island developing States (UN-OHRLLS) to include the recommendations of the conference in its awareness raising and advocacy on the special needs of the LDCs ;

17. **Request** that this Declaration be brought to the attention of the High Level Meeting on the comprehensive review of the implementation of the programme of Action of the LDCs for the decade 2001-2010 at the sixty first session of the General Assembly in New York on 19 and 20 September 2006;

18. **Invite** all Countries, Organizations and Institutions involved or interested in the issue of migrant remittances to work actively and jointly to the effective and quick implementation of recommendations and decisions of this Cotonou Conference.

19. **Decide** to put in place a Ministerial Committee and a Technical Committee responsible for monitoring the implementation of the recommendations and decisions of this Conference.

20. **Request** Benin, the Chair of the LDCs group, to circulate the Ministerial Declaration as the official document of the United Nations, and submit it as an input to the High-Level Dialogue on International Migration and Development to be held in New York on 14 and 15 September 2006